Delta RMP Guiding Principles

Mission

The program's mission is to inform decisions on how to protect, and where necessary, restore beneficial uses of water in the Delta, by producing objective and cost-effective scientific information critical to understanding regional water quality conditions and trends.

Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the Delta RMP is to provide coordinated Deltawide monitoring, reporting, and assessment of water quality, while pursuing the following objectives:

1. Improve the efficiency of water quality data collection and management in the Delta;
2. Generate products that inform and educate the public, agencies, and decision makers;
3. Raise awareness of Delta water quality conditions and how they impact beneficial uses;
4. Foster independent science, objective peer review, and a transparent review process;
5. Focus on the Delta;
6. Focus on the highest priority water quality information needs; and
7. Contribute to a holistic understanding of the Bay-Delta

Management Questions

Delta RMP participants have articulated core management questions that organize and guide RMP studies:

Type	**Management Questions**
Status and Trends	Is there a problem or are there signs of a problem? a. Is water quality currently, or trending towards, adversely affecting beneficial uses of the Delta? b. Which constituents may be impairing beneficial uses in subregions of the Delta? c. Are trends similar or different across different subregions of the Delta?
Sources, Pathways, Loadings, and Processes	Which sources and processes are most important to understand and quantify? a. Which sources, pathways, loadings, and processes (e.g., transformations, bioaccumulation) contribute most to identified problems? b. What is the magnitude of each source and/or pathway (e.g., municipal wastewater, atmospheric deposition)? c. What are the magnitudes of internal sources and/or pathways (e.g. benthic flux) and sinks in the Delta?
Forecasting Water Quality Under Different Management Scenarios	a. How do ambient water quality conditions respond to different management scenarios b. What constituent loads can the Delta assimilate without impairment of beneficial uses? c. What is the likelihood that the Delta will be water quality-impaired in the future?
Effectiveness Tracking	a. Are water quality conditions improving as a result of management actions such that beneficial uses will be met? b. Are loadings changing as a result of management actions?

Principles of Operation

The Delta RMP's Methods of Operation form the foundation of program activity.

- **Focus on the Delta:** The geographic scope of the Delta RMP encompasses the legal Delta (as defined by section 12220 of the Water Code), including water bodies that directly drain into the Delta, Yolo Bypass, and Suisun Bay. In addition, the base monitoring and special studies of the Delta RMP may extend upstream, if required to address specific management questions. Since Suisun Bay is outside the jurisdiction of the Central Valley Regional Water Board, sampling here will require coordination and collaboration with the San Francisco Bay RMP.
- **Focus on the highest priority water quality information needs**: A strategic planning process ensures that the Delta RMP focuses on the highest priority water quality information needs for beneficial use protection and restoration in the Delta.
- **Contributing to a holistic understanding of the Bay-Delta:** The Delta Science Plan will serve as a framework that contributes to a holistic understanding of the Bay-Delta and, thus, as a conduit for tying Delta RMP monitoring and assessment activities to the Delta Plan adaptive management approach.
- **Leveraging activities and resources:** the Delta RMP will leverage activities and resources by building on and partnering with existing programs, initiatives, and organizations to the extent possible. The Summary of Current Water Quality Monitoring Programs in the Delta (http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/delta_water_quality/comprehensive_monitoring_program/draftfinal_deltamon_25nov09.pdf) and the Central Valley Monitoring Directory (centralvalleymonitoring.org) provide information that might be helpful in identifying potential partners.

- **Clearly described and transparent processes and agreements** will guide the program governance and its operations. Following governance groundrules established by the Steering Committee, all stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in the RMP (see Figure 1: Organizational Chart for the Delta RMP). Documents describing committee roles and responsibilities, basic governance decisions (quorum, voting, participation), the overall development pathway flowchart (to be finalized), the strategic planning process (to be defined) and other governance groundrules and agreements are made available on the Delta RMP website (currently: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/delta_water_quality/comprehensive_monitoring_program/index.shtml)
- **Adaptability and Flexibility:** Frequent committee and workgroup meetings and periodic program reviews will maintain the Delta RMP's capacity to adapt in response to changing management priorities and advances in scientific understanding. Pilot and special studies constitute a mechanism for responding quickly to new information and/or concerns, assessing new technical approaches, investigating particular questions that have defined scientific, management, or regulatory endpoints, and evaluating new directions for the RMP as a whole.
- **Collaborative culture:** Fostering a collaborative culture will enable participants to work together to address multiple competing and potentially conflicting interests (such as habitat restoration, flood protection, water supply, and human and wildlife consumption in fish) in an environment that encourages objectivity, consensus-building, and science-based decision-making.

Cost and Permit Changes

The intent is for the initial implementation of the RMP to be cost-neutral for permittees. Therefore, cost neutrality is a key principle guiding permit changes that will allow the shifting of monitoring resources from existing individual permit compliance to regional monitoring. Cost-

neutrality refers to the overall cost of compliance for individual permittees. Additional important cost considerations are:

- Aim for cost savings collectively versus all current Delta monitoring costs.
- Seek funding partnerships.
- Each stakeholder type should develop its own cost function.
- Account for major in-kind contributions to program costs insofar as they translate into direct programmatic cost savings.
- Divide funding obligations into fixed costs for core program and variable costs for special studies.

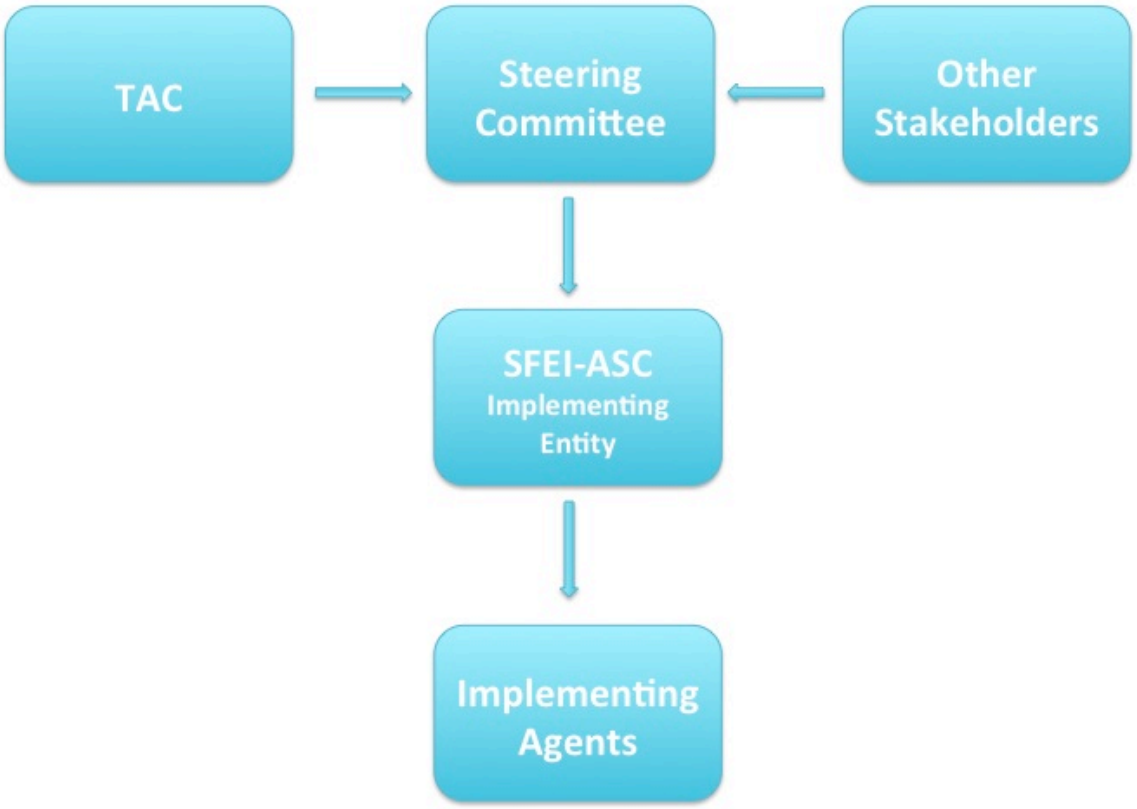

Figure 1. Organizational Chart of the Delta RMP